

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD)

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development (Data Collected Annually)

Currently, there are 197 filled counselor positions out of a possible 213 (FTEs). The DSU currently has 16 vacant counselor positions. There are approximately 14,500 active cases with an IPE now being served. On average, each counselor services 74 cases at any given time. It is anticipated that 41,000 will be served over the year, with each counselor serving approximately 200 total consumers during the year. The ratio of personnel to applicants and eligible individuals is 133.9 (360 authorized positions/41,000 consumers). Our ability to serve consumers is dependent upon:

- Case services dollars available
- Number of counselors employed by the DSU

The more limiting factor is that of the availability of case services dollars.

There currently are 11 WDA Directors and 12 VR Program Supervisors. In addition, 77 program assistants/ case coordinators support the work of the counseling staff. It is expected that this level of professional staff will be need to be maintained in order to serve the level of demand for services. This takes into account the expected number of retirements and resignations for other employment opportunities.

Over the next 4 years, 8 counselors per year are expected to retire. In addition, 4 other counselors will leave for other reasons each year. The DSU also anticipates reduced hiring authority based on a continued downsizing of personnel in state government positions through 2007.

The DSU projects that it will need at least 293 authorized positions in 5 years to serve the number of individuals projected to be eligible for services. The following chart shows the current authorized FTEs by personnel category, number of personnel expected to retire or leave, and the number of new hires.

Personnel Category	7/1/05 Authorized Positions	Projected Retirements & Resignations	Projected New Hires	7/1/07 Authorized Positions
Voc. Rehab. Counselors	213	60	30	183
Case Assistants	77	20	--	57
Managers/ Supervisors	31	9	4	26
Central Office Support	39	12	--	27
TOTALS	360	101	34	293

There are three institutions of higher learning within the state of Wisconsin that prepare individuals for careers as vocational rehabilitation counselors. These are the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Stout and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Plans for Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Qualified Personnel

The following is an overview of the current DVR counselor complement:

DEGREE	NUMBER	CORE PARTICIPATION	NON CORE PARTICIPATION	CORE COMPLETE	IN CSPD
Ed.D	1	1	0	0	NA
Masters – core	110	NA	NA	NA	NA
Masters – other	43	34	7	2	NA
4 yr. Or less -other	40	23	15	2	8
None	4	0	3	1	0
Total	197	57	25	5	8

While the agency cannot require “grandfathered” staff hired before May of 1992 to obtain a Masters degree, the agency can require that all counseling staff have the necessary knowledge that would be obtained through taking the core rehabilitation courses or their content equivalent if they do not already have it.

These are the recommended core rehabilitation courses at the undergraduate level:

- Foundations of Rehabilitation
- Counseling Theories & Techniques
- Medical/Psychosocial Aspects of Disability
- Assessment of Persons with Disabilities
- Job Placement/Vocational Aspects of Disability
- Case Management in Rehabilitation
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Ethical Decision making in Rehabilitation
- Psychological Aspects of Disabilities
- Counseling Practicum

During this past year, the DSU has worked with staff from Region V RCEP and has offered sessions on Medical/Psychosocial Aspects of Disability and Ethical Decision-making in Rehabilitation. Additional offerings of these courses will take place this year. DSU staff is also continuing to explore the possibilities of offering core courses via the Internet or in other distance learning formats.

The DSU is continuing to fund the CSPD educational plans for 8 DVR counselors pursuing a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. If these staff did not continue with their MS program, they would then be required to gain the knowledge presented in the core courses. The average cost for a 3-credit course is \$932, with the range from \$1,510 per 3-credit course at UW-Milwaukee to \$982 at the UW-Oshkosh. The DSU is receiving funds from the Michigan CSPD fund to cover tuition and books accrued costs. During the 2002-2003 year, a small amount, \$3,000 has been kept in the DVR HRD budget to cover tuition costs of staff not involved in a Master's Degree training program.

Personnel Standards

To use the title of "Professional Counselor" the individual must be licensed as a professional counselor under Chapter 457 of the Wisconsin State statutes. To be licensed, you must have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, 3,000 hours of post master's degree clinical supervision, pass the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) exam, or the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) exam, and pass the Wisconsin Jurisprudence examination. This is the state personnel standard which exceeds the national standard.

Licensing requires a master's degree in one of the following areas:

Guidance and Counseling	Counseling Psychology
Rehabilitation Counseling	Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling
Vocational Rehabilitation	Guidance-Vocational Counseling
Educational Rehabilitation Counseling	Educational Counseling
Rehabilitation Psychology	Vocational Rehabilitation Guidance
Behavioral Disabilities	MS in Ed.-Emphasis in Counseling or Guid.
Educational Psychology-Counseling	MS in Ed.-Emphasis in Guidance and Coun.
Community Human Services	Counseling Emphasis-UW Green Bay, LaCrosse, or Oshkosh

All vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Wisconsin DSU in May 1992 were "grandfathered". All vocational rehabilitation counselors hired by the DSU since May, 1992 have met this standard or have acquired a two-year "Professional Counselor Training License". This license allows them to be employed and acquire the 3,000 hours of post master's degree clinical supervision. In addition they must take the examinations mentioned above before they are fully licensed.

State personnel rules require state professional counselor licensing as a condition of employment for all vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the DSU. Since all vocational rehabilitation counselors as of May 1992 were grandfathered, they are licensed and the DSU can not require these counselors to obtain a master's degree as a condition of continued employment. All counselors must complete at least 30 hours of continuing education credits every two years in order to maintain their professional counselor license in Wisconsin. In addition, the DSU can mandate certain training, which was discussed in another section in this attachment.

In Wisconsin, vocational rehabilitation counselors are covered by the collective bargaining provisions of the Wisconsin State Employees Union (WSEU) contract. The employer may direct the employee to attend training, providing all expenses are paid.

Ability to hire qualified Staff

A major factor in Wisconsin that had previously inhibited the DSU from hiring qualified counseling staff was low pay compared to the private sector. As a result of the combined efforts of the Department of Workforce Development, DVR, and the Department of Employment Relations, and the Wisconsin State Employees Union, the VR Counselor pay range series received a substantial increase this past year. The starting salaries follow.

** VR Counselor in Training---\$16.23 Per/hr starting.

** VR Counselor (A)---\$17.56 Per/hr starting

** VR Counselor (B)---\$19.00 Per/hr starting

Note: Trainee is a new hire with a Masters Degree; Counselor Level (A) is a counselor after clinical supervision (within 2 years); and Counselor Level (B) designates a counselor with expanded work responsibilities.

Elimination of the pay disparity with other public and private counseling positions has resulted in the return of some employees who had terminated their employment with the DSU. In addition it has made it easier to recruit and hire qualified staff with master's degrees, and it is anticipated that it will also have a positive impact upon retention of counseling staff. The DSU maintains a close working relationship with the three rehabilitation counselor training programs in the state to assist in recruiting, training, preparing and retaining qualified personnel, including persons from minority backgrounds and persons with disabilities. Students from these programs frequently serve internships with the DSU. This provides a significant opportunity for the DSU to recruit new staff and students the opportunity to learn first hand how the DSU helps persons with disabilities to become employed.

Staff Development

The In-Service Training Grant has supported training for all DVR staff. For example, in the past year, staff has received training on the Individualized Plan for Employment, and a comprehensive training for new and existing counseling staff. Training was also offered to Program Assistants from offices throughout the state to facilitate these individuals becoming involved in the provision of more case coordination. In addition, both the DSA and DSU conduct new employee orientation training for all new employees.

In addition to the training provided to all counselors, new supervisors are required to attend training offered by the Wisconsin Office on State Employment Relations. The DSU is currently updating its own supervisory training and will be offering this to all VR program supervisors and WDA Directors. In an effort to minimize retention problems and promote leadership development, all staff are encouraged to participate in appropriate capacity building training activities within the parameters of applicable bargaining unit guidelines.

Training records are kept for each employee. Annual goals and accomplishment reviews (GARs) are done with each employee. These help the DSU identify where other training is needed, and by which staff. The annual plan for training all staff is included in the staff development grant and is based upon an assessment of training needs.

The DSU continues to implement and improve upon a streamlined service delivery system. The DSU also continues to align itself with other partners under the Workforce Investment Act. A need for further training and cross training has developed as the roles for both DSU staff and WIA staff have evolved.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

The DSU maintains the ability to communicate with customers in their preferred mode:

1. The DSU has the technology to prepare Brailled materials.
2. The DSU maintains a list of qualified interpreters for Spanish, Hmong, German, Russian, and Polish languages.
3. The DSU maintains a list of qualified providers of sign language interpreters.

Coordination with IDEA

The DSU has renewed its agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. As part of this agreement DVR and DPI will:

1. Provide joint vocational rehabilitation, special education, and transition in-service training programs to state and local education and rehabilitation professionals responsible for these services and any individuals affected by or interested in this agreement.
2. Promote joint information sharing, with parental or adult student's written consent when needed. Use pertinent information on each student including any evaluations and assessments that have been done to enhance the coordinated development of quality IEPs and IPEs for students with disabilities. In addition, inform students with disabilities not receiving special education services about vocational rehabilitation services.

3. Work together to share, when authorized, existing data to provide and evaluate the effectiveness of transition and subsequent services. DVR and DPI will also work together to develop follow-up studies and a compatible tracking system of exiting students with disabilities, and others.
4. The DSU works together with DPI on the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Project which involves 18 other states.

Retention of Qualified Staff

Retention of qualified staff is accomplished through various strategies. The most attractive financial compensation for long term staff is the state retirement benefits offered to State of Wisconsin employees. This type of financial incentive makes it possible to retain qualified staff once they have been employed for a period of time. The medical, vacation and leave benefits are also attractive.

Another strategy employed by the DSU to retain current qualified personnel has been extensive training and mentoring of new and senior counselors. During the past year there have been two comprehensive counselor-training sessions held for new and senior counselors. Fifty counselors have completed this training with the expectation that all staff will have acquired this training over time. The training covers everything from new policy issues, rehabilitation fundamentals, to the day to day process from eligibility through closure. In addition current staff have received separate training on IPE development, purchasing practices, and records and confidentiality training. Along with several other scheduled training sessions during the year, current counselors are given the support they need to address every day issues of their work.

The Wisconsin DSU has made extensive efforts to retain current staff with flexible work schedules and interesting liaison assignments. Staff are allowed to work various work schedules during the week so that they are able to fulfill family and other responsibilities. Staff are also encouraged to continually update professional development through local and statewide disability related training.

Succession Planning, Leadership Development and Capacity Building

Several activities have been initiated in the area of succession planning and leadership development. Several VR supervisors have completed leadership training offered through the Department of Workforce Development. This is an ongoing activity and will continue as the individual need exists. Supervisors have also attended individual leadership conferences and training for specific leadership skills.

Succession planning was addressed through the reorganization plan for Workforce Development Area (WDA) Directors. This reorganization has now been in place for slightly over 15 months and aligns the DVR field structure with the Workforce Development Areas (WDA's). There are 11 WDA's in Wisconsin. One DVR manager is responsible for all activities in his/her WDA. This ensures more local control and the flexibility to resolve problems and issues at the lowest possible level. All WDA's also have at least one supervisor to review, monitor, and oversee day to day work as well as to develop community and employer relationships. In terms of succession planning, this would allow continued recruitment of new managers into positions of leadership as more senior managers retire.

As a critical component of training for leadership development, quarterly meetings are held for WDA Directors and VR Supervisors at which time various topics are addressed. As an example, the July, 2004 meeting will be extended one day to allow for Ethics training for managers and supervisors. This training will be conducted by staff of the Region V RCEP.

The Wisconsin DSU has also used the Department of Workforce Development's mentor program as a tool to leadership development. This program assigns those interested in leadership roles an opportunity to be mentored by current managers in a formalized series of activities. This allows current qualified counseling staff an opportunity to more fully understand the role and responsibilities of current managers so that they can make an informed decision in choosing a leadership position.

Capacity building for new counselors has been addressed, to some extent, by the use of paid internships for students in rehabilitation counseling programs, counselor assistants, and mentorships. Many of the counselors who have completed these internships have been permanently hired by the DSU. The DSU continues to actively work with Wisconsin graduate programs as well as programs in other states to build future counselor capacity.

The DSU has worked closely with the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council in the development of the State Plan and its attachments. As required under section 105(c)(3) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(3), the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) provided comments and advise to the designated state agency (DSA) and the designated state unit (DSU) regarding the activities authorized to be carried out under Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The WRC also provided assistance to the DSA and DSU in the preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments including the CSPD.